

**DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

*The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.*



**CONTACT: OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**  
**(916) 657-7202 Tom Marshall**  
**(916) 657-8639 - FAX**

August 27, 2001

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**01-27**

***CHP OUTRAGED OVER LACK OF NOTIFICATION BY CESSNA***

(SACRAMENTO) Following three major mechanical malfunctions in the engines of its fleet of new Cessna 206 airplanes, California Highway Patrol Commissioner Spike Helmick grounded the entire fleet last week. It now comes to light that the Federal Aviation Administration had previously issued a special airworthiness bulletin warning of these problems, but Cessna never passed the warning on to the CHP.

Reacting to this latest information, CHP Commissioner Dwight 'Spike' Helmick commented, "I'm really disappointed that Cessna did not act in an upfront manner to warn us of this danger. They never even mentioned the F.A.A. bulletin even after we reported our three problems late last week."

Last November, the CHP ordered fourteen Cessna 206's for a cost of nearly \$400,000 each. Two of the aircraft experienced total engine failures during flight. Last week one of the planes made a forced landing on a rural airstrip near Red Bluff when the engine stopped. Previously, another CHP Cessna 206 experienced the same failure and was able to land at Mather Airport in Sacramento. A third plane was found to have metal shavings in the oil line.

All twelve of the Cessna 206's delivered so far to the CHP are now grounded. The other two planes ordered have not been delivered yet.

The F.A.A. bulletin warns of defective bearings in Textron Lycoming engines installed in the Cessna 206's built between August 24, 2000 and January 31, 2001. It goes on to warn that the failure can be detected by checking for metal shavings in the engine oil filter. It further warns, "If this

condition goes undetected, you could experience engine seizure and an in-flight shutdown.” It would appear that is exactly what was happening in the three CHP planes in question.

“We are concerned not only about our safety, but the safety of the public. We depend upon these aircraft for traffic enforcement, spotting forest fires and patrolling in remote areas,” added Commissioner Helmick.

The Cessna 206 replaces a fleet of older Cessna planes, many of which are over twenty years old. Some of the older planes and helicopters will fill in until the Cessna 206’s are cleared for use.

The CHP is a department of The Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary.

# # # # #

***Flex your power! Do ALL YOU CAN TO CONSERVE***